(c) and (d) The detainees/deportees normally refuse to divulge the names of the agents. Whenever the name of the agent has been indicated, the information has been conveyed to the concerned State authorities in India for further necessary action.

(e) As soon as information is received from the local Government about the detention of illegal immigrants, who claim to be Indian nationals, embassy officials are deputed to the respective detention centre to determine their Indian nationality. After their Indian nationality has been established, steps are taken to issue them travel documents to enable their deportation to India. The concerned Indian authorities are informed of their deportation.

Indian citizens detained in Pakistani jails

†2280. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item under the caption, "Bhartiya Jasoos Ki Jaan Dene Ki Dhamki", published in the "Dainik Jagran" dated the 15th August, 2002;

(b) if so, the time since when more than 1300 Indians are detained in the Pakistani jails;

(c) the steps taken by Government to get them released; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) As per available information, 1292 Indian nationals, including 360 fishermen and 54 missing defence personnel, are believed to be in Pakistani custody for varying duration. Government have consistently taken up the issue of their release and repatriation with the Government of Pakistan. As a result, 348 detainees including 281 fishermen were provided consular access by Pakistan Government during this year. Their release and repatriation is being pursued with the Government of Pakistan.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.